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AN ETHNOGRAPHIC SURVEY OF THE RIFFIAN TRIBE OF AITH WURYĀGHIL (*)

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101 Aith Wuryāghil is not only the biggest and most important tribe
•[161] in the Rīf, but the most heavily populated in the whole of the Spanish Protectorate of Morocco, totaling some 65.000 people at the present time. It is delimited on the north by the Bay of Alhucemas and by the Mediterranean Sea; on the west by the tribes of Buqqūya, Banī Yaṭṭuft and Targīst; on the east by the Nakūr River and the tribes of Tamsamān and Aith Tuzīn; and on the south by Aith Mazdūwī, Aith 'Ammarth and Gizināya (the last mentioned being just over the
101 border in French Morocco). Although Targīst and most of Banī
197 Yaṭṭuft are Arabic-speaking, the other tribes all speak the Riffian dialect of Berber. Aith Wuryāghil, Aith 'Amnlarth and northern Gizināya form, in particular, a Central Riffian linguistic bloc where Arabic is known only by a tiny literate minority. This dialect, called *Shilha* in Arabic and *Thamāzighth* in Riffian, is stronger in the Central Rīf than in any other part of northern Morocco, which gives an indication of the conservatism of the people who speak it. The three
101 nuclear Riffian tribes have all retained in large measure many of

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The population density, 65 individuals per sq. km., although not the highest in Spanish Morocco, is a greater number of people than the land, which is one of the most infertile in the Protectorate, can effectively support. In the last century the Aith Wuryāghil found blood-feuding a sure outlet to reduce their overpopulation, but, at the present time, as they are no longer allowed to carry firearms, the population problem is met by a large annual exodus of ablebodied tribesmen to the plains of western Algeria, where they help out with the barley, wheat, olive and grape harvests on the farms of French colons. The terrible drought in the Rīf in 1945 precipitated emigration to a previously unheard of degree, and today the number of people from Aith Wuryāghil who are living and working outside the Rīf is greater than ever before.

Those who stay at home follow an annual agricultural cycle in which cereal cultivation is extensively practiced, particularly that of barley. They plow and sow their fields in the autumn and winter, and reap and thresh the grain the following summer. The straw is piled up into circular, conical silos (*athmūn*, pl. *ithmūnen*) to be used in the winter as fodder for the animals, of which cattle and goats are the most important, sheep less so. Mules and donkeys are employed as beasts of burden, while horses, owing to the extreme poverty of the people and the mountainous configuration of the terrain, are virtually non-existent. All, without exception, keep chickens and, inevitably, dogs, while in certain favored areas apiculture is practiced; the bees of Jabal Ḥammām produce the finest honey which it has ever been my good fortune to sample.

Although barley is the most important cash crop (the barley harvest of 1953 was the best on record), the Aith Wuryāghil spend comparatively little time working their grain fields, not more than three or four months a year, all told; it is their trees which receive the bulk of their attention. The most common trees are fig, pomegranate and almond in the Bay of Alhucemas, with olive substituted for pomegranate in the mountains; they are all pruned, watered, grafted and fertilized with great assiduousness, for dried figs and almonds constitute the principal food reserves during the winters, after the grains have been eaten. The same is true of raisins, and the cultivation of grape vines is extensively practiced in the mountains near Sūq al-Arbaʿ of Taurirt.

175 (Sanchez Perez
161 mentions the population density of the Aith Waryaghar, in the mid-
114 1940s, as being 65 individuals per sq. km., a figure which would be outrageously high for much of the Atlas Mountains today, but which by the time of the 1960 census had in Waryagharland - or at least in the Plain of al-Husaima - doubled, virtually, to 120...[16])

000 Such facts indeed reflect the density of the local tribal population in the North Zone, but they also reflect the density of the local administration - and nothing has been said about urban administration, at that. The total population of the North Zone, in the 1950s, was just under a million; and even so, the thickness at ground level of administrative personnel would argue for a very direct form of administration. In actual fact, this was not quite so.

Each of the five territories of the zone had its Interventor Territorial, usually a lieutenant-colonel who reported directly to the Delegación de Asuntos Indígenas in Tetuan. Below him, in the administrative hierarchy, were several Interventores Comarcales, usually majors, and then Interventores de Primera Clase, usually captains, who were often seconded by lieutenant Interventores de Segunda who were the neophytes of the service, young men sent out to learn.

The real point about the intervencion system in the tribal areas, however, is that the Spanish interventor de primera, usually a captain, and the qaid or chief of the tribe which he administered were opposite numbers, each in his own separate hierarchy. For the interventor de

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[113] 16--Andrés Sánchez Pérez, "Datos Históricos sobre Ciudades Rifeños", Selección de Conferencias y Trabajos Realizados Durante el Curso de Interventores 1951-1952, Tetuan: Alta Comisaría de España en Marruecos, 1952, pp. 29-47 (my ref. to p. 31).

633 [504] The area is administered today from the small port and provincial capital of Alhucemas. The growth of this urban center, fishing port, and tourist attraction is but a recent [175] phenomenon. The city, founded in 1925 with the invasion of a Spanish fleet, has been the focal point for whatever innovation that has occurred in the Central Rif in this century.

133 361 Directly behind the city of Alhucemas is a flat plain. Although the land here is rich it was uninhabited prior to the Spanish because the terrain was indefensible during times of feuds. The original population was situated in the foothills [712] and higher mountains. Here homesteads were scattered and since they also served as garrisons or fortresses they were located on hills or ridges which could be defended militarily.

133 The area is not well served by rivers, the principal ones being the Rhis and the Nekor. The former rises in the Sonhaja area and empties into the Mediterranean at Alhucemas. The latter starts in Igzinnayen territory to flow along the border of the Beni Wariyaghar and the Beni Tuzin, emptying into the bay at Alhucemas. Both these rivers and their tributaries are used [312] [161] for irrigation and the population density is higher along them. There are also a good many natural springs (generally regarded as holy sites) and wells have been successfully dug in some of the valleys.

132 Rainfall varies annually and at times disastrously. At the weather station in Alhucemas during the decade 1946-1955, rainfall ranged from 8.5 inches to 16.9 inches. Although the

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The northern zone includes an area of about 20,000 square kilometers, roughly one-tenth of Morocco. The maximum width of the zone, from the Strait of Gibraltar to Wad Lukkus, is about 100 kilometers. The maximum length, from the Atlantic coast to Wad Moulouya, is about 340 kilometers. In 1950 the population of the zone was estimated at one million, including 85,000 Europeans in the Spanish protectorate, and another 150,000 Europeans in the cities of Tangier, Ceuta, and Melilla.

Territorial Divisions

Tribesmen of northern Morocco recognize three main confederations: Rif, Ghmara, and Sanhaja as-Srair (fig. 2). Most tribesmen recognize also a territory known as Jbala, the Arabic word for "mountains" or, in this case, "hills." There is no traditional name for the area west of a line drawn through Arcila and Ksar al-Kebir. In the Rif, tribesmen of the Atlantic coastal area are described as Igharbiyen (westerners). The Spanish referred to this area, approximately the basin of Wad Lukkus, as "Lucus." The easternmost sector of the protectorate, roughly the basin of Wad Kert, was known as Quert. The Moroccan government retained this division until August, 1958, when the northern zone was reorganized into larger territories. In the discussion to follow, reference is made to the traditional divisions, not to territories established in recent decades.

The confederacy of Ghmara consists of nine tribes: Bani Bu Zra, Bani Mansur, Bani Khalid, Bani Silman, Bani Siyyat, Bani Zejal, Bani Rzin, Bani Grir, and Bani Smih. It is proper to use the prefix *bani*, Arabic for "sons of," since only a few villages in Bani Bu Zra and Bani Mansur retain Berber speech. According to tradition, these tribes are descendants of the nine sons of an immigrant schoolmaster named Aghmir.[1] Whether this explanation is historically accurate is unimportant. The significant point is that the Ghmaran tribes have a sense of belonging together through descent from a common, if perhaps hypothetical, ancestor.

The confederacy of Sanhaja as-Srair is formed of ten tribes: Ktama, Aith Seddath, Bani Gmil, Aith Khannus, Taghzut, Aith Bu Nsar, Bani Bu Shibat, Bani Hmid, Aith Bashir, and Zarqat. Here it is proper to use *aith*, Berber for "people of," since the tribes thus designated still speak Berber domestically. On the southern slope of the Rif Mountains, in what used to be French Morocco, are two other Sanhajan confederations, Sanhaja Ghaddu and Sanhaja Musbah, but these groups no longer speak Berber and have little contact with the Sanhajans of the northern zone.

The limits of the Rif are more difficult to trace. Many Moroccans apply this term to the entire eastern half of the zone. Tribesmen living within the eastern area are more restrictive. Bani Bu Frah and Bani Yittuft are usually regarded as Rifian, although they have nearly lost Rifian speech. Mtiwa and Mistasa are disclaimed by both Rifians and Ghmarans; they may be the descendants of immigrants or exiles, for immigrant or exiled Rifians are found near Fez, at several locations in Jbala, and in the Oran department of Algeria. Targist presents a special problem: the cultural affiliation of this tribe has been obscured by the

[1] For further details see *L'Afrique Française*, November–December, 1958; and W. H. Lewis, "Rural Administration in Morocco," *Middle East Jour.*, 14 (1960), 45–60.

[2] Caro Baroja, *Estudios Mogrebíes* (Madrid: Instituto de Estudios Africanos, 1957), pp. [illegible].

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The introspective character of rural Morocco is enhanced by the weekly trading market or *suq* (plural *aswaq*). These markets attract urban merchants, craftsmen, and entrepreneurs, but their principal function is to serve as outlets for the products of local specialization. One family comes to market with a basket of figs, and another with a pannier of walnuts. After an interval of haggling, each leaves with the specialty of the other. Exchange of this sort helps to add variety to the diet, and encourages an intelligent appraisal of local conditions of soil and climate. Staple foods seldom enter into this exchange. The goal of each community is to be self-sufficient in breadstuff. A few commodities, such as sugar, salt, tea, and kerosene, are imported from the cities, but the chief function of the weekly market is to satisfy the modest wants of dispersed communities engaged in subsistence agriculture.

Markets are held in the open, at predetermined sites that are deserted during the rest of the week. In each tribal area one or more sites are reserved as market places and named as follows: *had* (Sunday), *tnine* (Monday), *tlata* (Tuesday), *arba* (Wednesday), *khemis* (Thursday), *jema* (Friday), and *sebt* (Saturday).[a] On the morning of the appointed day, streams of people converge on the market place. The *suq* is much more than a market in the economic sense of the word; it is also a social and political assembly of great importance in tribal life. Market day is the time for legal transactions and all manner of negotiation. By nightfall tribal authorities have resolved most of the problems of the week.

There is great variation in the size and influence of markets. In 1949 authorities of the Spanish protectorate made a study of the volume of business transacted at each *suq*. About a hundred markets were located; the annual volume of business, including barter, averaged about 10,000,000 pesetas per market. About a fourth of the markets had an annual business estimated at more than 65,000,000 pesetas (table 5). Most of the larger or regional markets are in the populous Rif (fig. 24). In the sparsely settled area of Sanhaja as-Srair, only one market, Tlata Ktama, serves as a trading center for more than one tribe. Khemis Izagan (pl. 7, *b*), with trade estimated at 3,000,000 pesetas, is typical of the smaller local markets.

Each market has four main functions: (1) distribution of local products, (2) exchange of rural surpluses or specialties for urban goods, (3) circulation of articles such as pottery and millstones from villages which specialize in making them, and (4) dissemination of foreign imports. The larger markets differ from the smaller in their greater emphasis on the latter two functions. Moreover, the larger markets are usually located at the convergence of communication lines and on the frontiers of complementary production zones.[b]

Emigration

Unfortunately, the weekly markets do not compensate for uneven distribution of population and productive land. Few communities are able to accumulate

(TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 93)

[a] On French maps the names of the days of the week appear as *had, tnine, tleta, arba, khemis, djemaa,* and *sebt;* on Spanish maps the usual spellings are *had, tenin, telata, arbaa, jemis, yumaa,* and *sebt.*

[b] On the location and function of markets and the changes caused by recent improvement in communications, see M. W. Mikesell, "The Role of Tribal Markets in Morocco," *Geog. Rev.*, 48 (1958), 494–511.

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surplus food for lean years. Many tribesmen, especially the Rifians and the inhabitants of Garet and Gal'aya, live under the constant threat of famine. Every failure of the cereal crop causes great suffering. Even with resources developed to the limit, these areas would still be unable to provide full employment or full nutrition for their expanding populations. The rate of population growth through-

TABLE 5

VALUE OF TRADE AT REGIONAL MARKETS IN 1949

Market	Volume of trade (pesetas)
Jbala—Lukkus	
Sebt Bani Said	43,000,000
Tlata Jbil Habib	89,000,000
Jema Zinat	80,000,000
Khemis Anjra	60,000,000
Tnine Sidi Yamani	117,000,000
Tlata Reisana	102,000,000
Sebt Bani Gurfat	82,500,000
Arba Aicha	68,500,000
Ghmara—Sanhaja as-Srair	
Had Bani Dercul	57,000,000
Tlata Bani Hmid	84,000,000
Tlata Ktama	65,000,000
Arba Targist	166,000,000
Rif—Garet—Gal'aya	
Tlata Aith Hadhifa	88,000,000
Arba Turirth	122,000,000
Tnine Aith Bu Ayyash	109,000,000
Tnine Aith Ammarth	65,000,000
Arba Aith Sidar	105,000,000
Khemis-Jema Driuch	138,000,000
Khemis Ain Zorah	107,000,000
Had-Tlata-Khemis Thimsaman	240,000,000
Tlata Ikibdhanen	104,000,000
Had Jbil Arruwi	101,000,000
Tnine-Khemis Thafarsith	78,000,000
Khemis Zaio	90,000,000

SOURCE: J. Cabello Alcaraz, *Apuntes de geografía de Marruecos* (Tetuán: Editora Marroquí, 1951), pp. 167–169.

out northern Africa must be described as alarming. In Morocco the mean annual increase is 1.5 per cent. This rapid increase creates serious economic problems, all the more so on account of the youth of the population, of whom 41 per cent are less than fifteen years old.[a] The spread of preventive medicine and the persistence of such social practices as early marriage and easy repudiation of sterile wives accentuate this trend. The cultivated area of northern Morocco has doubled in the last three decades,[b] but many tribes still find it impossible to grow enough food.

[a] Nevill Barbour, ed., *A Survey of North West Africa (the Maghrib)* (London and New York: Oxford University Press, 1959), p. 81.

[b] *Anuario estadístico, 1952–53*, p. 91, cited in note 1.

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The answer to this dilemma, if it may be called an answer, is emigration. In the decade preceding the current disorder, more than 30,000 Rifians went to Algeria each year to work on French farms. The main drift took place during the slack winter season, but smaller groups migrated at other times of the year. Few Moroccans thought of emigration as a permanent change. They were hired by members of their own tribe appointed to serve as contractors, and messengers visited them regularly to collect money for the families left at home. Each tribe had its special place of employment. The Aith Warishik went to Sidi bel Abbes, the Aith Tuzin to Tlemcen, the Thimsaman to Blida and Ain Temouchent, and the Gal'ayan tribes to Oran.[111] The largest number of emigrants were recruited from the Aith Said, and it is not a coincidence that the territory of this tribe includes spectacular badlands. From the standpoint of the French farmer this movement was a blessing, for the Moroccans worked harder than the Algerians and were satisfied with less pay. The tribesmen of the western Rif did not join in the seasonal movement to Algeria, but many of them migrated to Tetuán and Tangier.[112]

These movements are manifestations of a general trend. The oasis dwellers of the Mzab have long practiced emigration as a solution to their problem of overpopulation. The Mozabite is a farmer in his youth and again in old age; during the middle years he may be a bus driver, a shopkeeper, or a mechanic.[113] The same tradition is found among the craftsmen of Taghzut and some of the Shluh tribesmen of the Anti Atlas. Emigration is not a new development, but in recent years it has been practiced on an unprecedented scale.[114]

[111] F. Benedicto Pérez, "Trabajadores rifeños en Argelia," *Conferencias desarrolladas en la Academia de Interventores durante el curso de 1948* (Tetuán: Imprenta del Majzen, 1949), pp. 5–17.

[112] D. M. Hart, "Notes on the Rifian Community of Tangier," *Middle East Jour.*, 11 (1957), 153–162.

[113] In the Mzab the tradition of emigration for men is combined with a tradition that women must not leave the oasis. See Karl Suter, "Die Ortsgebundenheit der Frau bei den Mozabiten," *Geographica Helvetica*, 12 (1957), 102–114.

[114] On emigration see also Günter Glauert, "Veränderungen in den Bevölkerungsstruktur Nordafrikas in den letzen Jahrzehnten," *Die Erde*, 88 (1957), 298–319; René Raynal, "Déplacements récents et actuels des populations du bassin de la Moulouya (Maroc oriental)," *Comptes Rendus du Congrès International de Géographie, Lisbonne, 1949* (Lisbon, 1952), IV, 67–80; and J. C. Petit and Castet Barou, "Contribution à l'étude des mouvements de la population marocaine musulmane et de l'exode rural," *Bull. Economique et Social du Maroc*, 68 (1955), 423–459.